

ESSENTIAL

SQA EXAM PRACTICE



NATIONAL 5

ENGLISH

Practice Questions & Exam Papers

QUESTIONS & PAPERS

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Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation

Question type	Command word(s)	Approach	Practice questions in this book	
			Paper 1	Paper 2
Understanding: This type of question is designed to check you understand the ideas, meaning and language of the passage.				
Explain	Explain how	Locate ideas/words/phrases and paraphrase	1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9	1, 4, 6
Identify	Identify	Locate ideas/words/phrases and paraphrase		
Summarise	Summarise	Locate ideas/words/phrases and paraphrase Bullet points may help organise your answer		5
Analysis: This type of question is designed to check you can identify specific techniques writers use and comment on how they add to the reader's appreciation of the passage.				
Examples of language	Examples of language, word choice, sentence structure, tone, contrast, imagery	Identify techniques (these may be explicitly asked for or not) by quoting and then comment on how they answer the question.	7	3, 7
Word choice	Word choice, example of language	Quote an example and comment on how the words answer the question. Make reference to connotations.	3, 4	2
Sentence structure	Sentence structure, example of language	Find the techniques of sentence structure that answer the question and explain why they are effective.		
Imagery	Imagery, example of language	Look for metaphors, similes or personification and explain what these mean literally and in the context of the passage/question.		
Tone	Tone, example of language	Find the words that indicate the tone and explain how they do so.		
Contrast	Contrast, example of language	Identify both sides of the contrast and explain why they contrast, in relation to the question.		
Evaluation: This type of question asks you to consider how well a feature or idea contributes to the overall purpose or argument.				
Usefulness	Effectiveness	In relation to the question, pick examples of content, ideas or language and explain how these work.		9

Critical Reading – Scottish Set Text

Question type	Command word(s)	Approach	Practice questions in this book	
			Paper 1	Paper 2
Own words	Explain, using your own words	Locate ideas/ words/phrases and paraphrase.	1a, 5, 14, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27a, 34, 38	3, 6, 7, 11a, 14, 15, 22, 27, 40, 47, 48
Language	Explain how, Referring to example of language	Find the information in the text that answers the question. Quote and then explain in your own words why you have picked it.	1b, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 27b, 28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47b, 48	1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11b, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32a, 32b, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53
8 marker	Referring to this ... show how ...	<p>Include:</p> <p>2 marks worth for commonality.</p> <p>From the extract:</p> <p>2 marks for extract (i.e. 1 × relevant reference to technique or feature or idea (1) 1 × appropriate comment (1)).</p> <p>NB: maximum of 2 marks only for discussion of extract.</p> <p>Elsewhere or other texts:</p> <p>reference to technique or feature or idea (1) 1 × appropriate comment (1) × 2</p>	4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 25, 29, 33, 37, 42, 46, 49	4, 9, 12, 17, 21, 26, 30, 34, 39, 44, 50, 54

Question type: Evaluation

HOW TO ANSWER

Evaluation questions require you to use both your understanding and analysis skills to evaluate how well or how effectively you think the writer has used different language features to achieve the purpose of the passage. The SQA have selected the passages because of their effectiveness so your opinion and comment should reflect this.

The two main types of evaluation questions are:

- ▶ evaluating the effectiveness of introductions
- ▶ evaluating the effectiveness of conclusions.

Similarly, in evaluating the effectiveness of a conclusion, you should consider the following points:

- 1 Does it sum up the main points?
- 2 Does it restate the writer's point of view?
- 3 Does it link back to the introduction?
- 4 Does it use word choice/imagery from the introduction or throughout the passage?
- 5 Does it conclude in some other memorable way? For example, using a rhetorical question or powerful image.

For both effective introduction and conclusion questions, you need to have a clear idea of what the writer has tried to achieve and how the techniques used have helped them achieve their purpose. Therefore, when you answer evaluation questions you are expected to make a judgement about how successful the writer has been.

Top Tip!

When you are dealing with evaluation questions, it is essential that you select an example and then show how it connects with a point or technique used earlier in the passage. It is important that your comment connects to the passage as a whole.

Now try writing your own responses to these practice questions. You will need to refer to *Why didn't people smile in old photos?*

- 5 Look at lines 1–5. Explain fully how the opening paragraph is an effective introduction.

Hint!

This question asks you to explain how a feature, idea or technique adds to the effectiveness of the introduction. You need to quote an example from the introduction and then explain how it generates interest in the reader.

- 6 Look at lines 51–54. Select any expression from these lines and explain how it contributes to the passage's effective conclusion.

Hint!

This question asks you to choose an expression from the last paragraph and show how this relates back to a previous feature, idea or technique. You need to quote an example and explain how it adds to the effective conclusion.

MARKS STUDENT MARGIN

2

Evaluation

2

Evaluation

Critical Reading

The Critical Reading paper of the National 5 exam is in two parts and lasts for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The Scottish Set Text section requires you to answer questions on a Scottish author that you will have studied in class in detail with your teacher. This is worth 20 marks. The Critical Essay section is worth a further 20 marks and you have the choice of answering on the following genres: Drama, Prose, Poetry, Film and Television Drama, or Language. You will have studied at least one of these genres in class and have practised essay writing, with your teacher giving you feedback. You should only attempt one Critical Essay.

It is important to point out that your answer in the Critical Essay section **must** be from a different **genre** to your Scottish Set Text answers. You cannot use the same genre for both Section 1 and Section 2. In other words, if you have studied the play *Sailmaker*, you could not go on and write an essay on the plays *Bold Girls* or *Tally's Blood*. You should spend approximately 45 minutes on each section of the Critical Reading paper.

Many of the skills you need to be successful in the Critical Reading paper draw heavily on the understanding, analysis and evaluation skills you developed in Section 1 of this book and the RUAE papers that you will have practised.

The Scottish Set Text

The Scottish Set Text involves you studying literature (drama, prose or poetry) by a Scottish author from a list prescribed by the SQA. This list is refreshed every few years but the current texts you can study at National 5 level are as follows:

Drama

- ▶ *Bold Girls* by Rona Munro
- ▶ *Sailmaker* by Alan Spence
- ▶ *Tally's Blood* by Ann Marie di Mambro

Prose

- ▶ Short stories by Iain Crichton Smith: *The Red Door*, *The Telegram*, *Mother and Son*, *Home*
- ▶ *The Cone-Gatherers* by Robin Jenkins
- ▶ *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson
- ▶ Short stories by Anne Donovan: *All that Glisters*, *Away in a Manger*, *Dear Santa*, *Hieroglyphics*
- ▶ *The Testament of Gideon Mack* by James Robertson

Poetry

- ▶ Carol Ann Duffy: *War Photographer*, *Valentine*, *Originally*, *Mrs Midas*, *In Mrs Tilscher's Class*, *The Way My Mother Speaks*
- ▶ Norman MacCaig: *Assisi*, *Visiting Hour*, *Aunt Julia*, *Basking Shark*, *Hotel Room*, *12th Floor*, *Brooklyn Cop*
- ▶ Edwin Morgan: *In the Snack-bar*, *Trio*, *Good Friday*, *Winter*, *Glasgow 5 March 1971*, *Glasgow Sonnet i*
- ▶ Jackie Kay: *My Grandmother's Houses*, *Lucozade*, *Gap Year*, *Keeping Orchids*, *Old Tongue*, *Whilst Leila Sleeps*

You will study at least one of the authors on the list in detail with your English teacher, who will prepare you for this section of the Critical Reading paper. In the Scottish Set Text section of the exam, you will be asked to read an extract from a text you have studied in class and then answer questions on it. This part of the exam is worth 20 marks. The first 12 marks are about the extract that is published in the exam paper, while the final 8-mark question relates to either other poems or short stories, or the text as a whole if you have studied drama or a novel.

The skills you require to be successful here are very similar to the understanding, analysis and evaluation skills you will develop when practising RUAE. The main difference is that these questions are about literature rather than non-fiction. However, the strategies that you adopt to answer the questions will be the same.

Hint!

Before you begin answering the questions it is important to:

- ➔ Read the poem/excerpt through before you start, even if you know it well
- ➔ Read the questions **carefully**. This will ensure you know exactly what is being asked
- ➔ Check how many marks each question is worth and think about how these marks will be allocated.

Common command words and phrases

As in RUAЕ, there are certain command words and phrases that will tell you exactly what the examiner is looking for. Look out for common phrases used in exam papers and prepare for how to answer them. The question types below will give you advice on how to answer Scottish Set Text questions.

»» HOW TO ANSWER

Identify two of the main concerns in the text ...

Identify is a command word that means find an idea and put it into your own words – unless it asks you to identify a quote or technique. When asked about the main ideas or concerns of the text, show your understanding of the poem or text's story and the main messages and themes it is conveying. You should use your own words as far as possible.

Show how one example of the language helps to clarify or illustrate meaning ...

This is an **analysis** question, asking you to focus on the **language**. Like language questions in RUAЕ, you need to quote from the text to support your answer. You will need to include a relevant quote to gain one mark, and comment on its effect in relation to the question to gain a further mark. The number of marks available will guide your response.

How effective do you find ...

This is an **evaluation** question. These questions are asking how well you think the writer has done something. In the same way as RUAЕ, it is easier to argue that the writer has used language effectively and then show how by quoting a word or technique and commenting on it.

How effective do you find any two aspects of the final stanza as a conclusion to the poem?

This is another **evaluation** question, typically used in reference to poetry. When answering a question that asks you about the conclusion of a poem, you will need to show an understanding of the term 'conclusion' and show how the last lines continue the ideas or language or imagery from the rest of the poem. Generally, conclusions sum up the key ideas of a text and leave us with something to think about.

Top Tip!

Some possible features or ideas that you could comment on include:

- a continuation of the ideas
- a continuation of language
- a continuation of imagery
- a link or echo of the opening lines
- a striking or dramatic final line which highlights one of the poem's key ideas
- the use of rhetorical questions.

The final question

The final question is worth 8 marks. You may choose to answer in bullet points in this final question, or write a number of linked statements. There is no requirement to write a 'mini essay'. It will ask you to compare or contrast the excerpt you have in front of you with at least one other text you have studied by the same writer, or the rest of the play or novel if you have studied drama or a novel.

Marks are allocated according to your ability to identify aspects of commonality. This means you need to analyse the extract and show how it relates to ideas and language features found elsewhere in your chosen text or texts. The marks are allocated as follows:

- ▶ Up to 2 marks can be achieved for identifying elements of commonality as identified in the question.
- ▶ A further 2 marks can be achieved for reference to the extract given. You should refer to the extract you have been given in relation to the question.
- ▶ 4 additional marks can be awarded for similar references to at least one other text/part of the text by the writer in relation to the question. This means that you will make a relevant reference to technique, idea or feature and make an appropriate comment.

We will now look at some examples of Scottish Set Text questions. The texts we will look at are *Sailmaker* by Alan Spence; *The Cone-Gatherers* by Robin Jenkins and an extract from *Mrs Midas* by Carol Ann Duffy.

Questions

- 1 Summarise what is said between Davie and Billy in lines 2–24. Make at least **four** key points.

Hint!

Question 1 is a **summarising** question. You are asked to make at least four key points. It is a good idea to bullet point your answer. In your answer you should explain, using your own words, what is said between Davie and Billy. There is no need to use quotations.

- 2 Explain how one example of sentence structure of lines 11–16 helps the audience to understand how Davie is feeling.

Hint!

Question 2 focuses on **sentence structure**. Therefore, you should only comment on this feature and show how it conveys Davie's feelings to the audience. You will need to make an appropriate reference to sentence structure and analyse how it shows Davie's feelings.

- 3 Explain how the dialogue in lines 18–25 emphasises the difference between Davie and Billy.

Hint!

Question 3 asks you to show your **understanding** of how Davie and Billy are different to one another. You will need to use your own words.

- 4 Explain what is revealed about **two** aspects of Davie's personality in lines 16–37.

Hint!

Question 4 asks you to comment in detail about what is revealed about Davie's personality in lines 16–37. This means that you will need to make appropriate references and comment on how they reveal Davie's personality to the audience.

- 5 By referring to the extract and to elsewhere in the play, show how the playwright presents the character of Davie.

Hint!

Question 5 asks you to show how Alan Spence presents the character of Davie in this extract and the play as a whole. Up to 2 marks can be achieved for identifying elements of commonality as identified in the question. You can gain a further two marks by making a reference to the extract and commenting on how the playwright presents Davie. The final four marks are achieved by making reference to and analysing the presentation of Davie in the rest of the novel.

You can see example answers to these five questions in the Answers to Practice Questions section (page 25).

MARKS STUDENT MARGIN

4

Understanding

2

Analysis

2

Analysis

4

Analysis

8

Evaluation

Critical Reading

Duration: 90 minutes

Total marks: 40

SECTION 1 – Scottish Text – 20 marks

Read an extract from a Scottish text you have previously studied.

Choose ONE text from either

Part A – Drama

or

Part B – Prose

or

Part C – Poetry

Attempt ALL the questions for your chosen text.

SECTION 2 – Critical Essay – 20 marks

Attempt ONE question from the following genres – Drama, Prose, Poetry, Film and Television Drama, or Language.

Your answer must be on a different genre from that chosen in Section 1.

You should spend approximately 45 minutes on each Section.

Write your answers clearly in the answer booklet provided. In the answer booklet you must clearly identify the question number you are attempting.

Use **blue** or **black** ink.

Before leaving the examination room you must give your answer booklet to the Invigilator; if you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.

Section 1 – Scottish Text – 20 marks

Part A – Scottish Text – Drama

Text 1 – Drama

If you choose this text you may not attempt a question on Drama in Section 2.

Read the extract below and then attempt the following questions.

Bold Girls by *Rona Munro*

The extract is from Scene One. The women recall the night Cassie's husband was arrested.

- NORA: Oh do you remember the night they took Joe? You should've seen me, Marie.
- CASSIE: She was something that night, Andytown's own Incredible Hulk, 'Don't get me angry'!
- NORA: Well Marie, there was wee Cassie —
- CASSIE: Wee? I'm wee again am I?
- 5 NORA: —just a week out the hospital with the stitches still in from the section that gave us Teresa, and I open my door and here she is running up the road —
- CASSIE: That was when we had our own house, you know, at the end there —
- NORA: Squealing 'Mummy! Mummy!' —
- CASSIE: —one hand clutching my stomach 'cause I'm sure the whole lot's going to fall out.
- 10 NORA: —'Mummy! Mummy! They're taking Joe!' Well I just felt my blood rise —
- CASSIE: She was a lioness. She was.
- NORA: —I marched back up the road and here they were, dragging the poor man out of his own house without even a pair of shoes on his feet —

- 15 CASSIE: He'd been snoring away in front of the football, toasting his toes, with a pie in one hand and a can in the other.
- NORA: Sure he'd not been ready for any trouble; why would he be?
- CASSIE: And the rest of them are throwing everything every which way and all over the house and the baby's screaming and the child's calling for her daddy —
- 20 NORA: And he keeps his hand tight round this pie the whole time they were dragging him away. And I goes up to this big RUC man and I says —
- CASSIE: She picked the biggest.
- NORA: I says, 'What's the charges? Where's your warrants?'
- CASSIE: And he's peering down at her like he's a mountain and she's a beetle at the bottom of it.
- 25 NORA: And he says 'And who are you?' And I says, 'I'm that boy's mother-in-law, and before you take him you'll have to answer to me!'
- CASSIE: Can you beat it, Marie?
- NORA: And he says, 'You get out of our way Mrs or it'll be the worse for you.'
- CASSIE: He didn't say it as nice as that Mummy, there was a few fucking old ...
- 30 NORA: We do not need to use language like that Cassie! 'Out the way or it'll be the worse for you,' he says. Oh he was a big bastard Marie. 'Oh,' I says, 'Oh would you strike a woman that could be your own mother? Would you now?' (*She starts to laugh*)
- MARIE: What happened?
- CASSIE: Wallop! Knocked her straight through the hedge.
- NORA: (*still laughing*) Would you hit a mother? Sure I got my answer on the end of his fist.
- 35 CASSIE: Nearly choked on her false teeth.
- NORA: I did.
- CASSIE: I didn't know which of them to go to first, Joe, or Mummy in the hedge with her little legs waving in the air.
- NORA: (*wiping her eyes, still laughing*) Oh – oh but that was a terrible night.

- | | | MARKS |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | a) Look at lines 1–11.
Referring closely to two examples from these lines, show how Cassie's admiration for Nora is conveyed. | 4 |
| | b) Explain how the dramatist conveys the liveliness of the dialogue in these lines. | 2 |
| 2 | Explain one way in which the language of lines 12–18 conveys how fast-moving the incident was. | 2 |
| 3 | Look at lines 19–38. Explain how the dramatist creates humour in the way Cassie and Nora recall the event.
You should refer to two examples in your answer. | 4 |
| 4 | By referring to the extract and to elsewhere in the play, show how the women's lives are affected by 'The Troubles'. | 8 |

Section 2 – Critical Essay – 20 marks

Attempt **ONE** question from the following genres – Drama, Prose, Poetry, Film and Television Drama, or Language.

Your answer must be on a different genre from that chosen in Section 1.

You should spend approximately 45 minutes on this Section.

Drama

Answers to questions on Drama should refer to the text and to such relevant features as characterisation, key scene(s), structure, climax, theme, plot, conflict, setting ...

- 1 Choose a play in which there is a character who suffers from a human weakness such as jealousy, pride, ambition, selfishness, lust.
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the weakness is revealed, and then explain how this weakness affects both the characters and the events of the play.
- 2 Choose a scene from a play in which suspense or tension is built up.
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how this suspense or tension is built up and what effect this scene has on the play as a whole.

Prose

Answers to questions on Prose should refer to the text and to such relevant features as characterisation, setting, language, key incident(s), climax, turning point, plot, structure, narrative technique, theme, ideas, description ...

- 3 Choose a novel **or** a short story in which there is a character you admire or dislike or feel sorry for.
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author creates this character, and say why you feel this way about him/her.
- 4 Choose a novel **or** a short story **or** a work of non-fiction that explores a theme which you think is important.
By referring to appropriate techniques, show how the author explores this theme.

Poetry

Answers to questions on Poetry should refer to the text and to such relevant features as word choice, tone, imagery, structure, content, rhythm, rhyme, theme, sound, ideas ...

- 5 Choose a poem which presents a memorable picture of a person or of a place.
By referring to poetic techniques, explain how the poet makes the picture memorable.
- 6 Choose a poem which made you think more deeply about an aspect of life you think is important.
By referring to poetic techniques, show how the poet explores this aspect of life.

Practice Paper 1

Reading for Understanding, Analysis and Evaluation

Sport will continue to transcend the ages

Question	Expected response	Max. mark	Additional guidance
1	You should explain fully why the first paragraph is an effective opening to the passage as a whole. Be aware of and use a mixed approach (i.e. ideas and language) to this question. Any two points for 2 marks.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ it introduces the main topic of sport ... (1) ▶ ... and how much of it there is (1) ▶ it creates surprise/amusement at the sheer amount (1) Also accept: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ use of first person (1) ▶ use of list to demonstrate abundance of sport (1) ▶ understatement of 'a fair bit' (1) ▶ the density of proper names, numbers, abbreviations is almost confusing/disturbing (1)
2	You should explain in your own words four ways in which the importance of sport has changed over the years. Any four points for 4 marks.	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 30 years ago, no football on TV led to very little complaint (1) ▶ today, it would cause uproar (1) ▶ in mid-19th century, there were no major international/worldwide sporting events (1) ▶ in mid-19th century, there were no organisations set up to control sport (1) ▶ for a long time sport was not considered important (1) ▶ for a long time sport was seen by churches as an unsuitable way to spend time (1)
3	You should explain what the careers adviser's attitude was to sports journalism, and how one example of the writer's word choice makes this attitude clear. Identification of attitude (1) Reference (1) plus appropriate comment (1)	3	Identification of attitude, e.g. dismissive, contemptuous, disrespectful, scornful (1) Possible answers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'spluttered' (1) suggests she was taken aback, lost for words (1) ▶ 'doubted' (1) suggests she didn't think it was a viable career (1) ▶ list ('technology, video games, ...') (1) suggests she thought there were many competing attractions (1) ▶ 'host of other things' (1) suggests she thought there were many alternatives to an interest in sport (1)
4	You should explain how two examples of the writer's word choice demonstrate how fierce the competition is among TV channels. Reference (1) plus appropriate comment (1) × 2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 'drives' (1) suggests power, forcefulness (1) ▶ 'jostle' (1) suggests fighting, squabbling, jockeying for position (1) ▶ 'fever pitch' (1) suggests heightened, almost irrational activity (1) ▶ 'war' (1) suggests outright conflict, fighting (1) ▶ 'giants' (1) suggests the sheer size of the competing forces (1) ▶ 'cut the legs' (1) suggests violence, desire to maim, damage (1) ▶ 'Trojan horse' (1) suggests taking over by subterfuge, cunning/underhand way of winning (1)